

Romans: Verse-By-Verse

Romans 3:1-4

Student Notes

In the last chapter, Paul redefined what it meant to be Jewish. Paul made it clear that what God really intended was for the mark of circumcision to be the constant reminder – not of privilege – but of the obligation to keep a tender heart toward God and to take their obligations to the Torah seriously.

Continuing the discussion . . . Paul anticipates the objections of his Jewish counterparts.

vv. 1-2: “What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.

- **The “Jewish Advantage”:**

God’s intentions to bless the Israelites above all the other nations of the world. See Deuteronomy 28:9-13 What advantage was it to be Jewish? “Much, in every way.” Those advantages will be cited again in Romans 9:4-5:

“Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.” – Romans 9:4-5

- **The Primary Advantage of the Jews:**

“First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.”

God entrusted the Jews with the very words of God” – He gave it to Abraham and his descendants. That was their single greatest advantage.

While the rest of the world sat in self-imposed darkness – the Jews had God’s clear revelation.

Deuteronomy 4:5-7:

"See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. So keep them and do them for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." – Deuteronomy 4:5-7

The word, “entrusted” is very important. It means to take something you possess and ask someone else to be faithful in protecting and preserving. See: Genesis 39:4; Matthew 25:22; Jude 3

What the Jews received was not man’s word – it was God’s Word. The Bible declares this at least 2600 times within its own pages. See also: 1 Corinthians 4:2

- **The Question of Faithfulness:**

Verses 3-4: “What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: “So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.”

The underlying assumption: If humans didn’t believe God’s word and didn’t prove faithful to it – God’s plans would fail. Hence, “Unbelief erases God’s intentions.”

John MacArthur: “You could read it this way: ‘What if some were not

trustworthy, shall their untrustworthiness make God untrustworthy?”

Paul's meaning: "You had the advantage of God's Word and didn't benefit from it. You had the advantages of covenant and squandered it."

Will the Jews' lack of faithfulness nullify God's faithfulness and cancel God's purposes and promises? Paul: "Nonsense! Not at all". Greek: "me genoito" – "No, no, no, no!"

God can't break his promises. God can't go back on His Word. It's not possible for him to lie.

The prophet Zechariah tells us the day is coming when God will ...

"pour our out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son." -- Zechariah 12:10

- **Man's Failures – God's Faithfulness:**

v. 4: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."

Man's faithlessness never alters God's faithfulness or frustrates His purposes. Instead, the unfaithfulness of humans sets God's faithfulness in sharp relief.

Paul quotes David in Psalm 51:4: "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge."

David's Failures: Adultery and Manslaughter. Did David's failures nullify God's promises to Abraham and his descendants? No! God punishes

David for his unfaithfulness, but then God maintains all of his promises to him.

Even in his lowest moments, David upheld God's character and his right to punish him for his unfaithfulness.

Why Paul quotes Psalm 51: In spite of David's sins, God kept his covenant with his household. Paul is saying the same thing about the Jews. They have proven unfaithful, but God has proven faithful.

Their unfaithfulness puts God's faithfulness in sharp relief. It only magnifies how faithful God is to his promises.